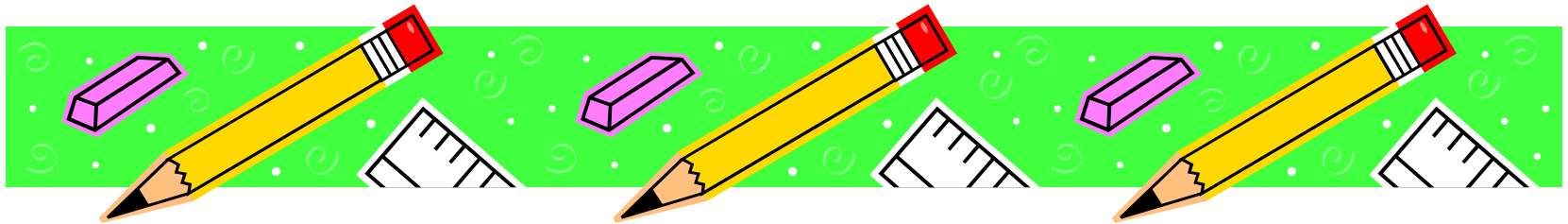


Sharpening Your TAKS Knowledge



A Handbook for Parents

Clear Creek Independent School District

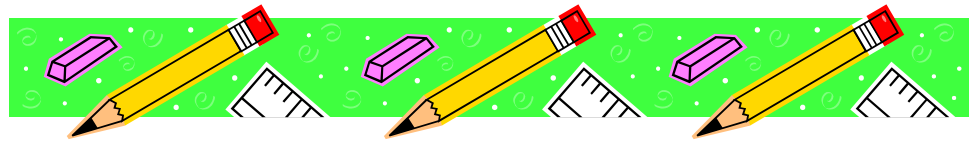
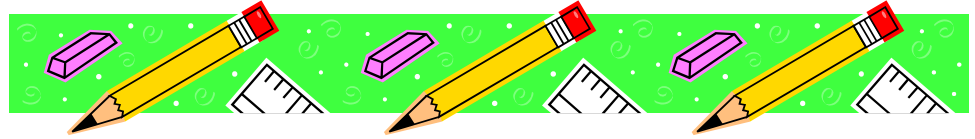
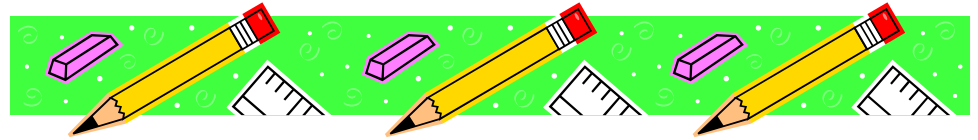


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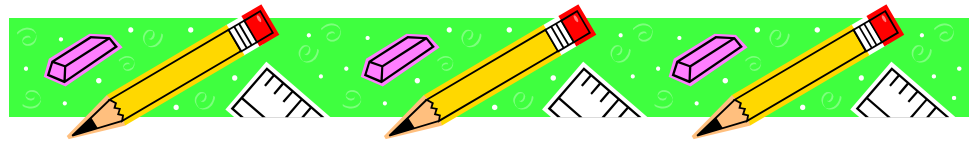


What is TAKS?

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is a comprehensive testing program for public school students in grades 3-11. The TAKS is designed to measure to what extent a student has learned, understood, and is able to apply the important concepts and skills expected at each grade level. The test can provide valuable feedback to students, parents, and schools about student progress from grade to grade. Students are tested in mathematics in grades 3-11; reading in grades 3-9; writing in grades 4 and 7; English language arts in grades 10 and 11; science in grades 5, 10 and 11; and social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11. Every TAKS test is directly linked to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. The TEKS curriculum is the state-mandated curriculum for Texas public school students. The essential knowledge and skills taught at each grade level build upon the material learned from previous grades. By developing the academic skills specific to the TEKS, students can build a strong foundation for future success.

Where did TAKS come from?

The development of the TAKS program included extensive public scrutiny and input from Texas teachers, administrators, parents, members of the business community, professional education organizations, faculty and staff at Texas colleges and universities, and national content-area experts. Committees of Texas educators identified the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills student expectations for each grade level and subject area that should be included on the tests. Then a committee of TEA Student Assessment and Curriculum staff incorporated these selected TEKS into the development of the tests. The thorough test-development process that was used for the TAKS program included educator reviews and revisions of all proposed test items before field-testing and a second educator review of data and items after field-testing. The Student Assessment Division relied on educator input to develop items that are appropriate for each grade level and that are valid measures of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.



Do all students in Grades 3-11 take the TAKS test?

No. The law states that students that are receiving special education services and do not receive TEKS instruction on grade level do not have to take the TAKS test. These students, as determined by their ARD committee, may take the State Adopted Alternative Assessment (SDAA), or the Locally Developed Alternative Assessment (LDAA) on the grade the level in which they are receiving their instruction. The law also states that a student can be exempt from the TAKS test on the basis of limited English proficiency, as determined by a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC).

Do students have to pass the TAKS test to be promoted to the next grade?

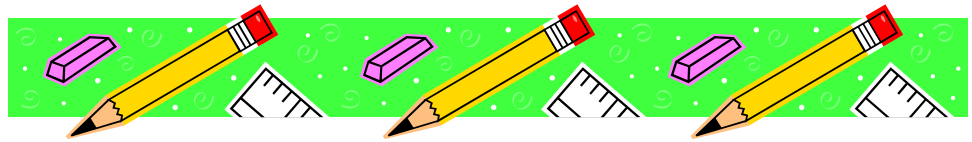
In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature enacted the Student Success Initiative (SSI), which mandates new grade advancement requirements to be phased in as follows:

2002-2003: Third grade students must meet the standard on the reading test to be promoted to fourth grade.

2004-2005: Fifth grade students must meet standards on both the reading and the math test to be promoted to the sixth grade.

2007-2008: Eighth grade students must meet standards on both the reading and math test to be promoted to the ninth grade.

As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level only by meeting the standard on these tests, or by a unanimous decision by a grade placement committee that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction.

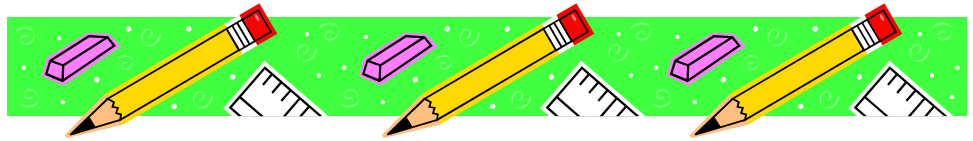


Do high school students have to meet the standards on TAKS in order to graduate?

Yes. Beginning in 2003-2004, eleventh grade students must meet the standard on each section of the TAKS test in order to receive a Texas diploma. They will have several opportunities to meet the standard on each section of the eleventh grade exit test. The sections on the eleventh grade exit test include English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Beginning with the class of 2006, students must have satisfactorily completed all requirements as outlined in Policy FMH (Local), and must meet all state and local graduation requirements, including all applicable exit-level testing to be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies and activities.

Which TAKS tests are given at each grade level?

- 3rd grade – reading and mathematics**
- 4th grade – reading, mathematics, writing**
- 5th grade – reading, mathematics, science**
- 6th grade – reading, mathematics**
- 7th grade – reading, mathematics, writing**
- 8th grade – reading, mathematics, social studies**
- 9th grade – reading, mathematics**
- 10th grade – English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies**
- 11th grade – English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies**



What are the dates of the TAKS tests?

The dates are set by the Texas Education Agency, and change somewhat from year to year. Typically, the following schedule applies:

Late February: Writing – Grades 4 and 7

Reading – Grade 9

English Language Arts – Grades 10 and 11

Late February/Early March: Reading – Grade 3 and 5

Early April: Math – Grade 5

Late April: Reading – Grades 4, 6-8

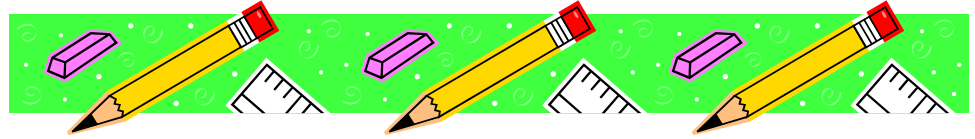
Mathematics – Grades 3-4, 6-11

Science – Grades 5, 10, 11

Social Studies – Grades 8, 10, 11

An official Student Assessment Calendar can be found at:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/index.html>



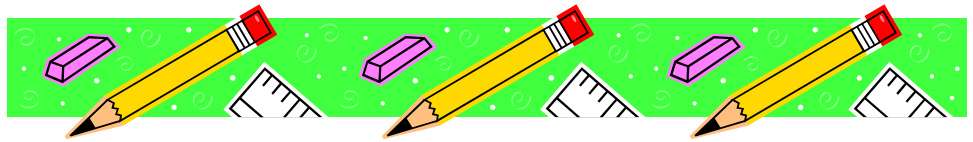
What kinds of selections and questions will be on the TAKS test?

Various types of selections will be used on the reading test, including short stories, newspaper and magazine articles, and textbook excerpts. Students will be asked to answer several multiple-choice questions about each selection that they read. In the upper grades students are also asked to write a short answer response for some of the test questions.

The writing test is divided into two sections. The first section is the Revising and Editing section. Students will read passages designed to resemble student writing. Multiple-choice items about these passages will require students to indicate how a particular sentence might be corrected or improved, or how the organization or development of a paragraph might be improved. The second section of the writing test is the Written Composition. In this section students are given a prompt in which they are to respond through a written composition.

Most of the mathematics answers are multiple-choice, however there are some “griddable” math items. For a griddable item, students are required to work out the problem, and then record the numeric solution on the answer sheet as individual digits.

The science and social studies tests consist of multiple-choice items.



How is the TAKS test organized?

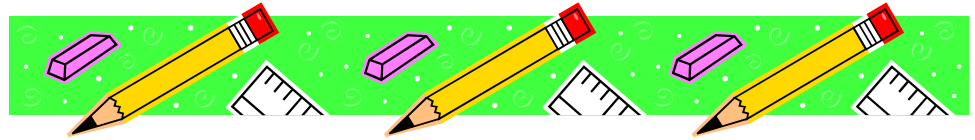
TAKS is organized by objectives. The objectives are broad “umbrella statements” rather than the specific objectives found in the TEKS. This organizational method allows TAKS objectives to remain identical across grade levels 3-8 and 9-11.

What are the objectives for each subject and grade level?

Reading – Grades 3-8

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of culturally diverse written text.

Students must be able to show that they have a basic understanding of the reading selections included on the test. Figuring out the meaning of an unknown word, finding important details and main idea, and recognizing accurate summaries are all part of developing a basic understanding.



Objective 2: The student will apply knowledge of literary elements to understand culturally diverse written text.

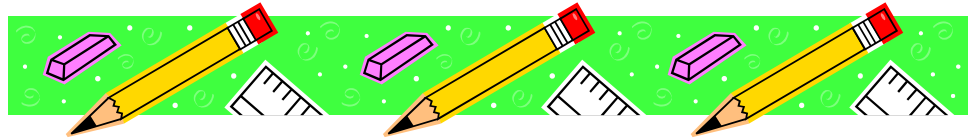
Students must be able to show that they understand the parts of a story – the events that happen, the setting (when and where the story takes place), the characters and the main problem. Students in the upper grades should also know literary devices, such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism.

Objective 3: The student will use a variety of strategies to analyze culturally diverse written text.

Students must be able to show that they can use different strategies to develop an understanding of the reading selections included on the test. Knowing the different purposes for reading (reading for entertainment, reading for information), recognizing the unique characteristics of different types of selections (how an article is different from a story), and using graphic organizers (charts, graphs, outlines, pictures) are all parts of using strategies to analyze text.

Objective 4: The student will apply critical-thinking skills to analyze culturally diverse written text.

Students must be able to show that they know how to use critical-thinking skills to develop an in-depth understanding of the reading selections included on the test. Students who can draw their own conclusions, make reasonable predictions about what they read, develop their own ideas, and use the text to support those ideas have a deeper, more complete understanding of a selection.



Reading – Grade 9

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of culturally diverse written text.

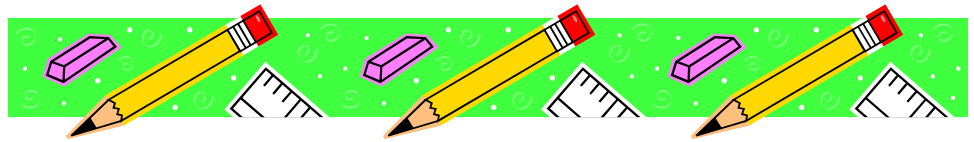
Students must be able to show that they have a basic understanding of the reading selection. Figuring out the meaning of unknown words, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries are all part of developing a basic understanding.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the effects of literary elements and techniques in culturally diverse written text.

Students must be able to show that they understand the literary elements that are found in stories. These elements include plot, conflict, character development, setting, and theme. Students must also understand how an author combines these elements to create an effective story. In addition, students must be able to recognize the literary devices or tools, such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism, to guide the reader's understanding of a story's characters, events, theme, and overall meaning.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate culturally diverse written texts and visual presentations.

Students must be able to show that they can develop understanding about the reading selections and visual representations included in the test. They must be able to draw reasonable conclusions, use the text to support their conclusions, make meaningful connections between important details and themes, and understand the techniques an author has used to develop a text.



English Language Arts (Reading and Writing) – Grades 10 and 11

(Reading)

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of culturally diverse written text.

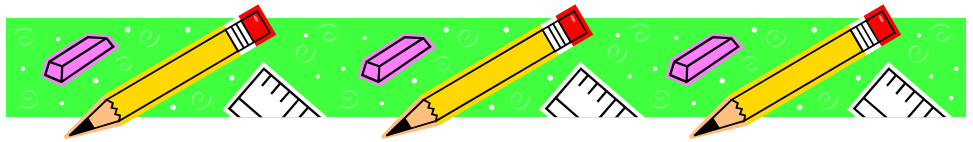
Students must be able to show that they have a basic understanding of the reading selection. Figuring out the meaning of unknown words, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries are all part of developing a basic understanding.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the effects of literary elements and techniques in culturally diverse written text.

Students must be able to show that they understand the literary elements that are found in stories. These elements include plot, conflict, character development, setting, and theme. Students must also understand how an author combines these elements to create an effective story. In addition, students must be able to recognize the literary devices or tools, such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism, to guide the reader's understanding of a story's characters, events, theme, and overall meaning.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate culturally diverse written texts and visual presentations.

Students must be able to show that they can develop understanding about the reading selections and visual representations included in the test. They must be able to draw reasonable conclusions, use the text to support their conclusions, make meaningful connections between important details and themes, and understand the techniques an author has used to develop a text.



(Writing)

Objective 4: The student will, within a given context, produce an effective composition for a specific purpose.

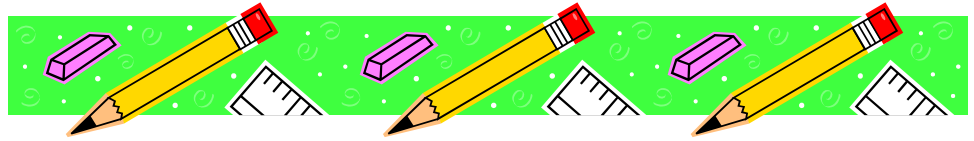
Objective 4 assesses the student's ability to write an effective composition on a specific topic. The student must be able to stay focused on the topic, organize sentences and ideas so that they are clear and easy to follow, make the ideas interesting, and develop the ideas in detail.

Objective 5: The student will produce a piece of writing that demonstrates a command of the conventions of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

Objective 5 assesses the student's ability to write as correctly and clearly as possible. This objective focuses on how well a student communicates on paper. The student must be able to follow the rules of correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

Objective 6: The student will demonstrate the ability to revise and proofread to improve the clarity and effectiveness of a piece of writing.

Objective 6 assesses the student's ability to both improve and correct passages created to resemble student writing.



Writing – Grades 4 and 7

Objective 1: The student will, within a given context, produce an effective composition for a specific purpose.

Objective 1 assesses each student’s ability to write an effective composition on a specific topic. To do well on this objective, a student must be able to stay focused on the topic, organize sentences and ideas so that they are clear and easy to follow, make the ideas interesting, and develop the ideas in detail.

Objective 2: The student will produce a piece of writing that demonstrates a command of the conventions of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

Objective 2 assesses each student’s ability to write as correctly and clearly as possible. This objective focuses on how well the student can communicate on paper. This means that when students write a composition, they are able to follow the rules of correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Most students make some errors when they write, but the fewer the errors, the easier it is for a reader to understand.

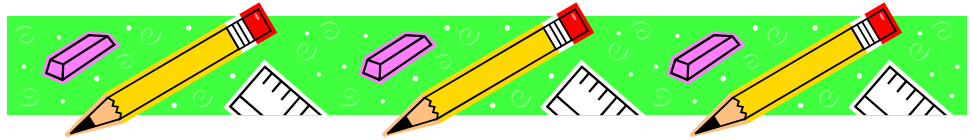
A student’s composition score represents the performance on Objectives 1 and 2. Scores range from 1 to 4. The meaning of each score is listed below:

A score of 1 = an ineffective response

A score of 2 = a somewhat effective response

A score of 3 = a generally effective response

A score of 4 = a highly effective response



Objectives 3, 4, 5, and 6 make up the multiple-choice part of the test. On this part of the test, students revise and edit selections called “peer-editing passages”.

Objective 3: The student will recognize appropriate organization of ideas in written text.

Students must be able to show that they can improve the organization and development of ideas in a piece of writing.

Objective 4: The student will recognize correct and effective sentence construction in written text.

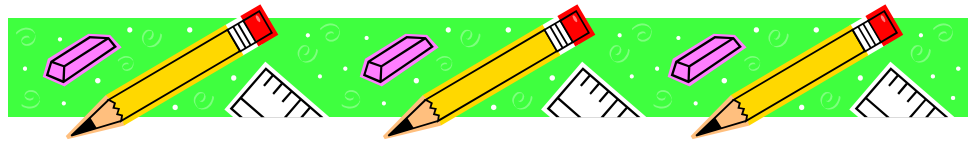
Students must be able to show that they understand how to correct errors in sentence structure and how to make sentences more effective.

Objective 5: The student will recognize standard usage and appropriate word choices in written text.

Students must be able to show that they understand how to correct grammar errors and use words that help the writer communicate clearly and effectively.

Objective 6: The student will proofread for correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in written text.

Students must be able to show that they know how to correctly capitalize words, punctuate sentences, and spell words that their grade level should know how to spell.



Mathematics – Grades 3-8

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of numbers, operations, and quantitative reasoning.

Students must be able to show their understanding of numbers, operations (adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing), and quantitative reasoning (knowing when an answer makes sense).

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of patterns, relationships, and algebraic reasoning.

Students must be able to show their understanding of patterns, relationships, and algebraic reasoning (understanding the use of symbols to represent real-world situations).

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of geometry and spatial reasoning.

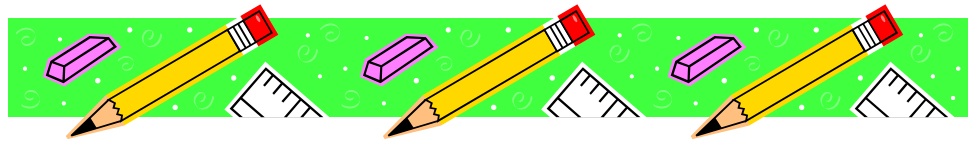
Students must be able to show their understanding of geometry and spatial reasoning (understanding the location or position of an object and the amount of space it occupies in the real world).

Objective 4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and uses of measurement.

Students must be able to show their understanding of the use of appropriate measurement. Students must also know how to apply measurement concepts.

Objective 5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of probability and statistics.

Students must be able to show their understanding of probability (the chance that an event will occur) and statistics (the collection, organization, and interpretation of data).



Objective 6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical processes and tools used in problem solving.

Students must be able to show their understanding of problem-solving strategies and tools, such as formulas, rulers, pictures, graphs, and tables.

Mathematics Grades 9 – 11

Objective 1: The student will describe functional relationship in a variety of ways.

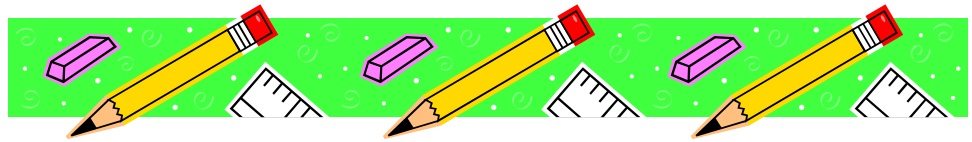
Students must be able to show their understanding of functions represented by pairs of numbers, where the value of one number depends on the value of the other number. Students must also be able to draw conclusions from functional relationships.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the properties and attributes of functions.

Students must be able to show their understanding of the similarities and differences between linear and quadratic functions. Students must also be able to solve algebraic equations.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of linear functions.

Students must be able to show their understanding that a linear function is an equation that can be represented by a line on a graph. Students must also know how the slope (rate of change) affects that line.



Objective 4: The student will formulate and use linear equations and inequalities.

Students must be able to show their understanding of the way to organize problems into equations and inequalities in order to find solutions to problems. Students must also know when using two related equations is the best way to find a solution.

Objective 5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of quadratic and other nonlinear functions.

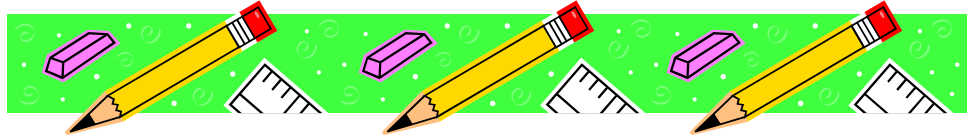
Students must be able to show their understanding of a quadratic function as it looks on a graph. They must also understand how the shape of the parabola on the graph changes as the equation changes. Students must know how to simplify algebraic expressions by correctly using exponents.

Objective 6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of geometric relationships and spatial reasoning.

Students must be able to show their understanding of how to locate ordered pairs of rational numbers on a coordinate plane. Students must also be able to use transformations, such as reflections, translations, and dilations, to identify similar geometric shapes.

Objective 7: The student will demonstrate an understanding of two- and three-dimensional representations of geometric relationships and shapes.

Students must be able to show their understanding of how geometric concepts and properties can be used to solve everyday problems. Students must also understand how solid, three-dimensional figures look from different perspectives.



Objective 8: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and uses of measurement and similarity.

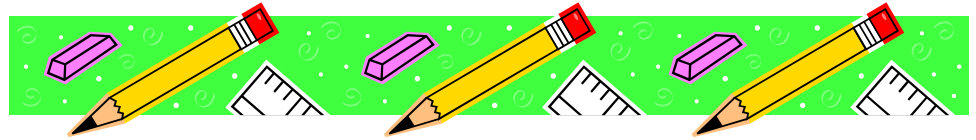
Students must be able to show their understanding of how to find the surface area and volume of solid figures. They must also be able to find missing measurements in similar shapes by using proportions. Students must be able to determine the effects on perimeter, area, and volume when any measurement is changed.

Objective 9: The student will demonstrate an understanding of percents, proportional relationships, probability, and statistics in application problems.

Students must be able to show their understanding of percents, probability, measures of central tendency, graphs, and misuses of graphical information.

Objective 10: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical processes and tools used in problem solving.

Students must be able to show their understanding of problem-solving strategies and tools, such as calculators, formulas, rulers, pictures, graphs, and tables.



Science – Grade 5

The Grade 5 science TAKS test is a comprehensive assessment. Even though the test is given at fifth grade, it covers science TEKS from grades 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of science.

Students must be able to show an understanding of experimental designs, the collection and organization of data, and safety issues. The student must also be able to analyze scientific information from various sources.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the life sciences.

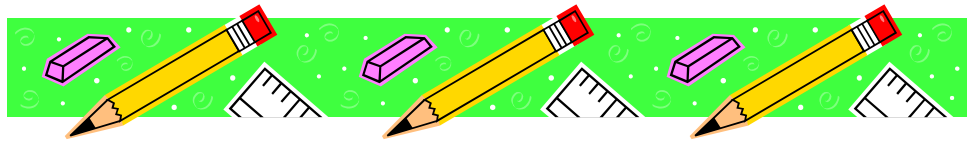
Students must be able to show an understanding of living things, such as plants and animals. Students must also know how organisms meet their needs and interact with other organisms.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the physical sciences.

Students must be able to show an understanding of the structure and properties of matter. Students must also know that forces cause matter to undergo changes.

Objective 4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the earth sciences.

Students must be able to show an understanding of the forces that are continually changing Earth's physical features. Students must also know that Earth is part of larger systems involving the sun, moon, and other planets in the solar system.



Science – Grades 10 and 11

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of science.

Students must be able to show an understanding of experimental designs, safety issues, and methods for collecting and organizing data. Students must also be able to analyze scientific information from various sources.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the organization of living systems.

Students must be able to show an understanding of how living systems are organized, from the molecular level to cell structures to organisms to ecosystems.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the interdependence of organisms and the environment.

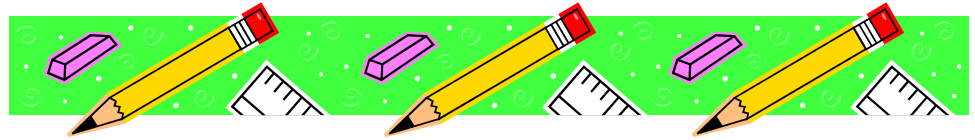
Students must be able to show an understanding of how all living things depend on their environment and other organisms for survival.

Objective 4: The students will demonstrate an understanding of the structures and properties of matter.

Students must be able to show an understanding of basic chemistry (what matter is composed of and what happens as matter changes).

Objective 5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of motion, forces, and energy.

Students must show an understanding of basic physics (how motion, forces, and energy are related and how these relationships help explain many of the everyday phenomena people experience).



Social Studies – Grade 8, 10 and 11

Objective 1: The students will demonstrate an understanding of issues and event in U.S. history.

Students must show an understanding of major issues in early American/ U.S. history such as:

Grade 8 – the fight for independence during the American Revolution. They must also understand the challenges faced by the early U.S. government, such as westward expansion and the Civil War.

Grade 10 - the fight for independence during the American Revolution.

Grade 11 - the fight for independence during the American Revolution and the role of the United States in World War I and World War II.

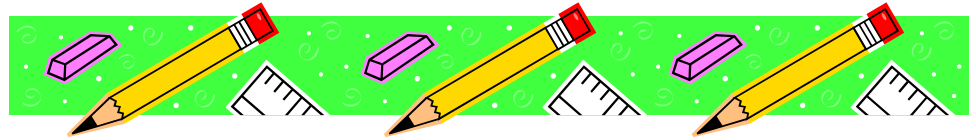
Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of geographic influences on historical issues and events.

Students must be able to show an understanding of how geographic factors influence historical issues and events, such as:

Grade 8 – the settlement of colonial America. Students must also be able to read maps, charts, and graphs.

Grade 10 - patterns of settlement in different parts of the world. Students must also be able to read maps, charts, and graphs.

Grade 11 - the construction of the Panama Canal. Students must also be able to read maps, charts, and graphs.



Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of economic and social influences on historical issues and events.

Students must be able to show an understanding of economic and social influences on historical issues and events, such as:

Grade 8 – the spread of slavery.

Grade 10 – World War I and World War II. Students must also show an understanding of the characteristics of different economic systems throughout the world.

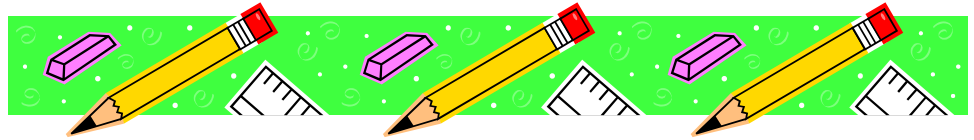
Grade 11 – the causes of the Great Depression and the impact of various reform movements on American society.

Objective 4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of political influences on historical issues and events.

Students must be able to show an understanding of political influences on historical issues and events, such as the development of representative government in colonial America and the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Objective 5: The student will use critical thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Students must be able to show the ability to use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information. They must also know how to interpret written and visual sources of historical information.



How do I know if my child met the standard on the TAKS test?

On the TAKS test, student performance is divided into three categories: Commended Performance, Met the Standard, and Did Not Meet the Standard. These categories are explained below.

Commended Performance – The student performed at a level that was considerably above the state passing standard. The student showed a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills tested at that grade level.

Met the Standard – The student performed at a level that was at or somewhat above the state passing standard. The student showed a sufficient understanding of the knowledge and skills tested at that grade level.

Did Not Meet the Standard – The student performed at a level that was below the state passing standard. The student did not show a sufficient understanding of the knowledge and skills at that grade level.